



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP's support to the strengthening of social protection systems in Western Africa

August 2022

In many countries in Western Africa, poverty and food insecurity are high and pervasive, and intertwine with recurring shocks. As the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated at a global scale, social protection systems can and should be core elements of national responses to socio-economic effects of large-scale crises.

Investments in social protection are proven to address the root causes of poverty and hunger and this cycle of crisis over the longer term and therefore should be a core element of national and international responses in the region.

Despite their relevance, social protection systems are nascent and social protection programmes in Western Africa are generally fragmented and weak, varying from a low of 0.9 percent coverage in Guinea Bissau, to a high of 39.2 percent coverage in Cabo Verde. The regional average is 12.4 percent coverage.

Helping governments to scale up and enhance social protection is a key element of WFP's work with governments and partners in Western Africa, with the goal of increasing people's access to national social protection systems that safeguard and foster their ability to meet their food security, nutrition and associated essential needs, and also to manage the risks and shocks they face.

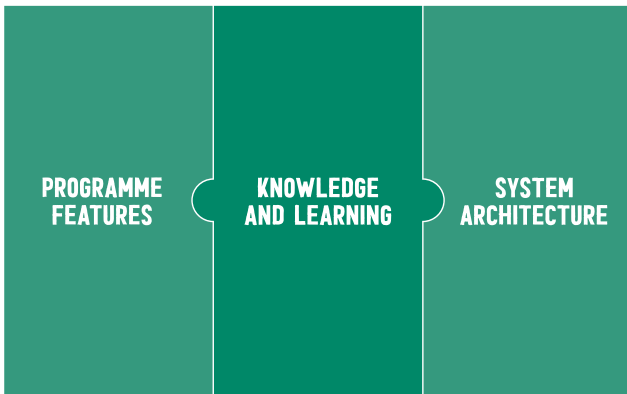
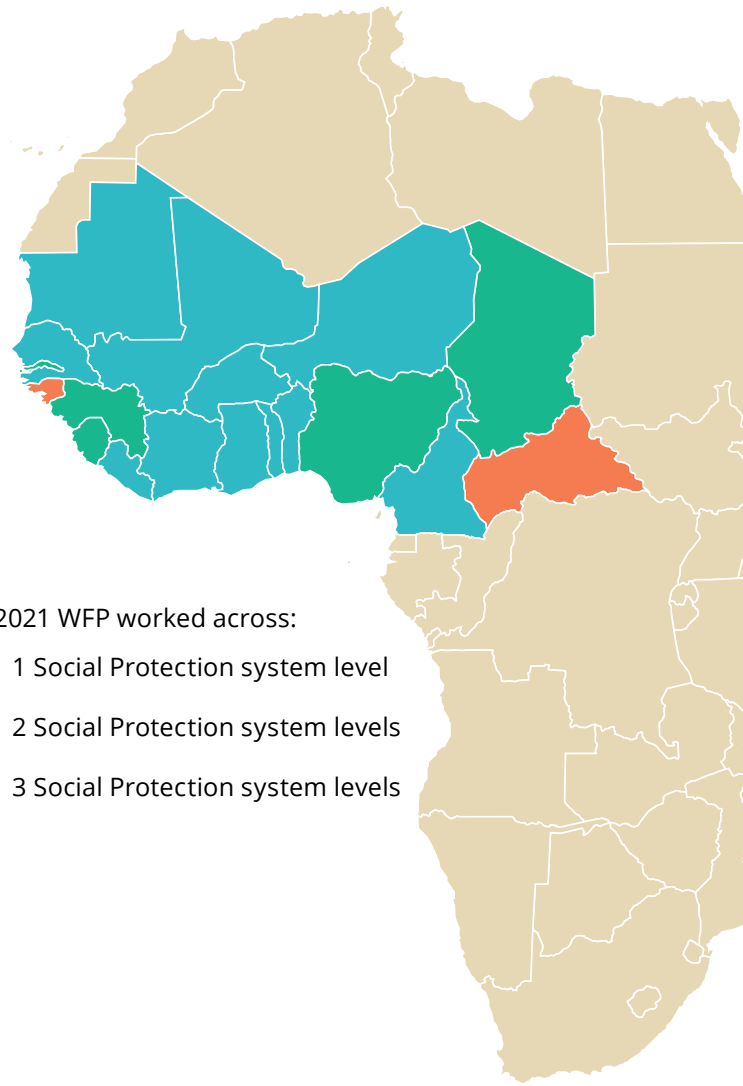
WFP provides technical advice and/or implements programmes on governments' behalf as needed to support national social protection systems. In addition, WFP's own programmes are often implemented in ways that are complementary to national social protection programmes. Leveraging our field presence and experience, WFP



offers expertise to governments to strengthen all pillars of social protection systems within the limits of our mandate and capacities.

This note provides a snapshot overview of key engagements in the region to support social protection systems at three levels: system architecture; knowledge and learning; and programme design and implementation.

Of the 19 countries in the region, WFP engages on three different levels in most of the countries:



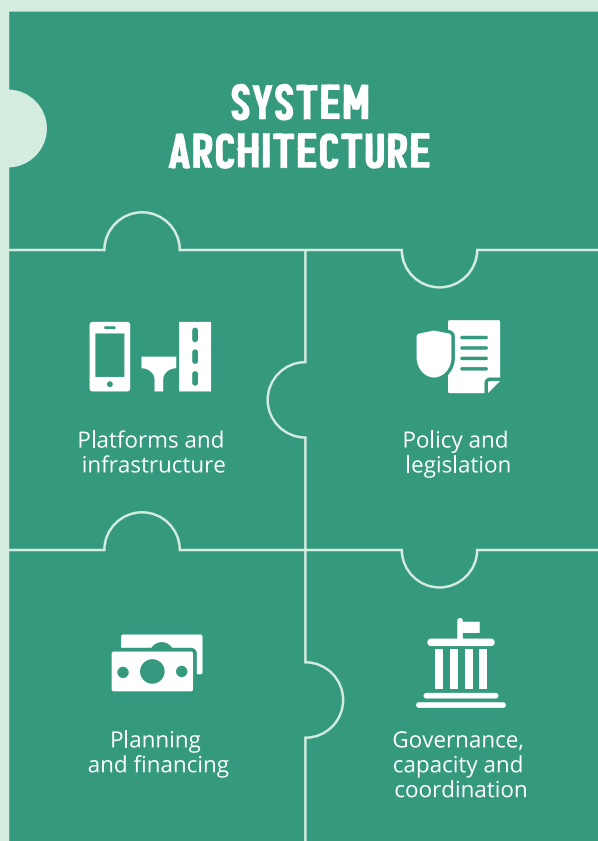
In 2021 WFP worked across:

- 1 Social Protection system level
- 2 Social Protection system levels
- 3 Social Protection system levels



System Architecture

Well-designed national systems are the enabling environment for strong and effective national social protection systems



POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Many countries in Western Africa have already initiated or completed processes to revamp their social protection policy frameworks, which were mostly originally developed in the early and mid-2010s before shock-responsive social protection agendas were developed. WFP supports government to ensure that food security and nutrition are adequately integrated into revised policies.

For example, in 2021-22, WFP provided support and inputs to the national social protection policies and strategies in Nigeria, Chad, and Sierra Leone, ensuring inclusion of shock-responsiveness and food security and nutrition-sensitive approaches. Jointly

with other partners such as the World Bank and UNICEF, in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, WFP is supporting governments to define and implement their policy review processes.

PLANNING AND FINANCING

Important strides have been achieved by WFP in this key area of work, in particular in terms of shock responsive social protection systems. Ensuring that financing strategies are in place to sustain the expansion of social protection programmes in anticipation or response to shocks is an important pillar of shock responsive social protection.

In Mauritania in particular, WFP has made important contributions in this area, working mainly with the World Bank in support to the government to define a risk financing strategy and help setting up the National Food and Nutrition Crisis Response Fund (FNRCAN) which is a financial/budgetary mechanism to ensure funding of the annual response to slow-onset crises, by both the State and other funding sources. During the 2022 Annual ARC Replica Meetings in Abidjan, WFP supported strategic reflections on the role of microinsurance to support shock responsive social protection and how to better link the African Risk Capacity (and ARC replica) pay-outs and social protection systems, for increased efficiency and sustainability.

PLATFORMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

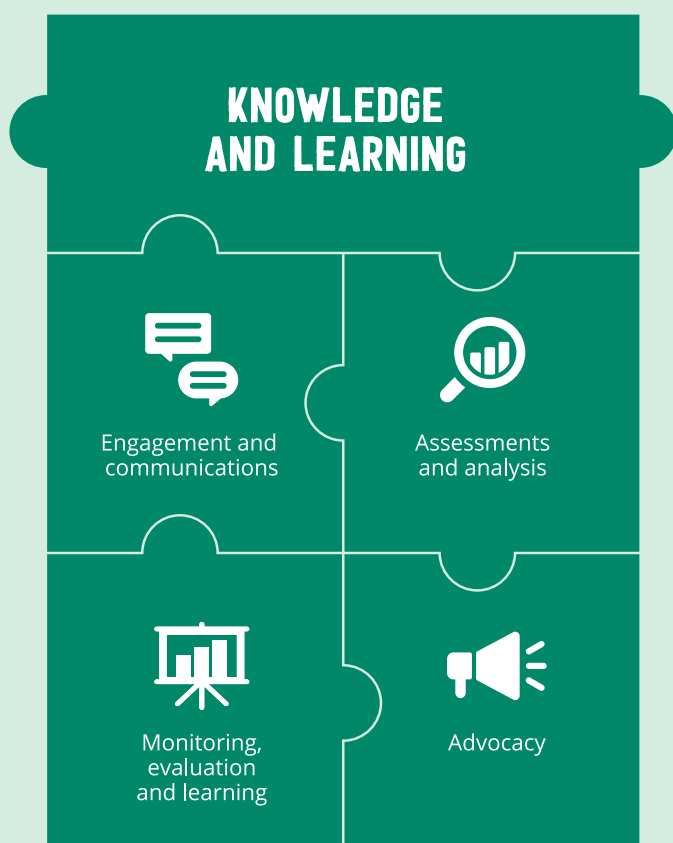
Social protection systems are increasingly supported by platforms to support programme delivery and coordination. In the region, social registries are key platforms which are growing rapidly. Social Registries are information systems which contains personal data to support the registration and defining of eligibility of households and individuals for social protection programmes. As such they fulfil an operational role for programmes, but as well a policy role as an inclusion mechanism.

In Burkina Faso, WFP together with the World Bank, has supported the institutionalisation process of the social registry, through the establishment of the Secretariat Technique du Registre Social Unique (ST-RSU), and plays a key role in coordination around the social registry. WFP has supported south-south and

triangular cooperation between the governments of Chad, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Republic of Congo, Brazil to share experiences and strengthen the capacity of the Chadian government to define its vision for the roll-out of the social registry. In The Gambia, WFP has been contributing to strengthening data sharing and privacy processes for the social registry, to ensure the registry can be used by a broad range of actors while protecting people's data.

Knowledge and Learning

The starting point of adequate and effective policy/programme design and implementation is data and evidence. WFP brings a specific expertise, through the experiences of our operations and strong capacity in data- and evidence generation.



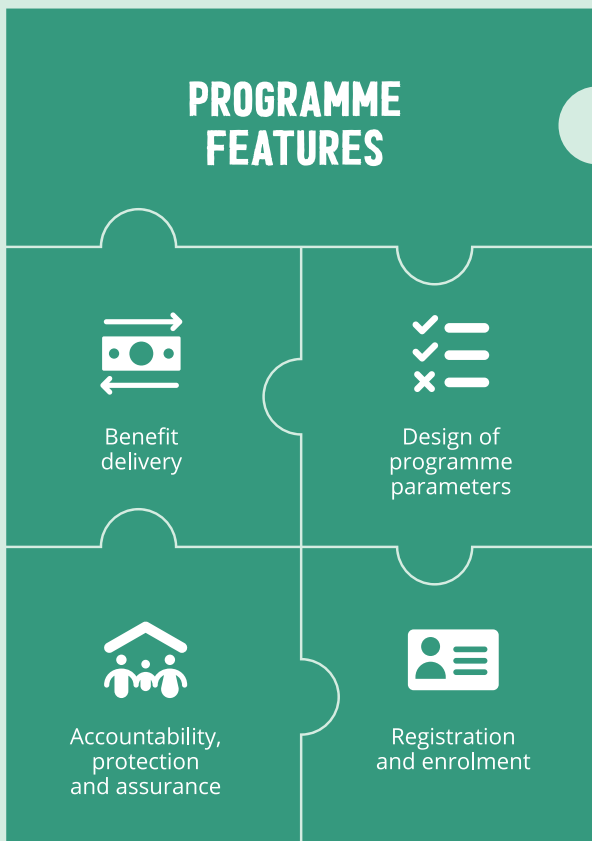
WFP is a strong partner to Governments in the region when it comes to analysis around food security and vulnerabilities. Eight countries in the region have developed a Fill the Nutrient Gap (FNG) analysis providing key information on the cost of a nutritious and healthy diet.

In Mauritania, WFP organised a national workshop to launch the FNG and discussions focused on using these findings to inform the national school feeding programme and more broadly the rest of the social protection sector. In Mali, WFP supported the organisation of a nutrition-sensitive social protection workshop, under the leadership of the government, which aimed at sensitizing stakeholders across government ministries and advocating for more nutrition-sensitive approaches in the social protection sector.

WFP has also stepped up its support to governments through context-specific assessments to inform strategic decisions. In Burkina Faso, WFP supported a simulation exercise and identification of strategic steps to enhance the shock-responsiveness of social protection and institutional linkages with disaster management. WFP also completed a joint study with the World Bank to assess existing databases to inform the design of the new social registry. In Mauritania, WFP supported a joint study on the social registry that has helped define the Government's social protection targeting approach. At the regional level, WFP partners closely with the World Bank and UNICEF in generating annual adaptive social protection status overviews to provide a meta-overview of the trends in the region that informs strategic advice at country level, as well as advocacy efforts at regional and country level and increased visibility of progress made.

Programme Features

At the programme level, WFP strives to ensure coverage of adequate and comprehensive benefits and services for the most vulnerable and food insecure households and the hardest to reach populations, as well as supporting Governments to ensure quality of delivery.



PROGRAMME DESIGN

WFP has been supporting Governments in the region with both strategic advice around national social protection programme designs, as well as partnering in implementation of programmes design that takes into account the need to address food insecurity and malnutrition. Amongst others through addressing the affordability gap for nutritious food especially among pregnant

and lactating women, and children 6-23 months, as well as building resilience against shocks.

WFP worked closely with the Mauritania Government's Taazour Agency to ensure the redefining of the targeting methodology of the national social registry so Malian refugees are included, hence allowing more efficient and coordinated targeting and access to social protection benefits. In Mali, WFP is complementing the national safety net Jigisemejiri by targeting pregnant and lactating women and children under two and providing them with value vouchers for nutritious foods, complemented by social and behaviour change communications promoting the use of nutritious foods. This intervention, under a project called CRIALCES, adopts a food systems approach, also addressing through different activities the availability of healthy and nutritious foods in local markets.

BENEFIT DELIVERY

Social protection programmes need to be supported by efficient and inclusive delivery systems to operationalize programme designs. WFP has played an increasingly active role since 2020 in supporting Governments in the region to ensure continued delivery and expansion of shock-responsive social protection assistance during a time when needs have been rising exponentially, particularly in the Sahel region.

In Niger, Mali and Mauritania, WFP jointly with UNICEF is supporting Governments in the delivery of social assistance to vulnerable households in response to shocks. Through a so-called 'twin-track' approach, a combination of delivery modalities is used to ensure horizontal and vertical expansion of existing government programmes: both by channelling support through national programmes (track 1) and implementing support in alignment with these programmes in areas where national programmes are not yet operational (track 2). In this way, the twin-track support is answering to the increased and urgent needs in a timely manner, whilst strengthening national programmes. In 2021, WFP reached about 933,000 people with cash and complementary services aligned with national social protection interventions.



This note shows selected highlights of achievements in Western Africa, amongst the many different ongoing engagements in the region. Going forward, WFP will continue to maximise its efforts in Western Africa to strengthen effective, shock-responsive, and food security and nutrition-sensitive national social protection systems.

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